

Hello Computer

A Pictorial History of Technology at JJC, 1961-1976

By Amy Chellino

"I overheard several faculty and administrative stalwarts whispering reverently, 'The computer is here' [and] 'Have you seen the computer yet?'" wrote student John R. Shields in the Blazer recalling the buzz on campus when the first computer arrived at Joliet Junior College in 1968. That first computer was mammoth, expensive and had limited memory and capabilities, but for 1968, this was cutting edge technology, and JJC was at the forefront.

From typewriters and keypunches, mainframes that filled an entire room to the first fifty-pound personal computer, the evolution of technology at JJC from 1961-1976 is illustrated through this retrospective spanning 25 years.

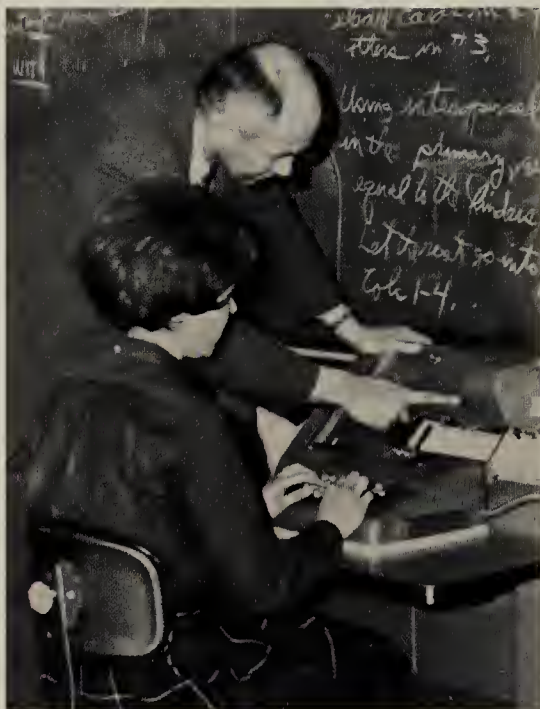
1960-1962

These photos from the 1960 and 1962 yearbooks show students using typewriters for their assignments. In an interview with JJC alumnus Joe Nichols '61, he recalls that typewritten assignments weren't even expected in his classes. "They couldn't be typewritten because typewriters weren't available for public use either at the college library or at the public library...The old typewriters were noisy, especially when they were bunched together...I think library patrons would have been annoyed by all the clatter those typewriters made," Nichols explained.



1963

From the early 1900s through the 1960s, mechanical calculators dominated the desktop computing market. This photo from The 1963 Shield shows students using mechanical high speed calculators. Electric calculators would take their place in the 1970s.

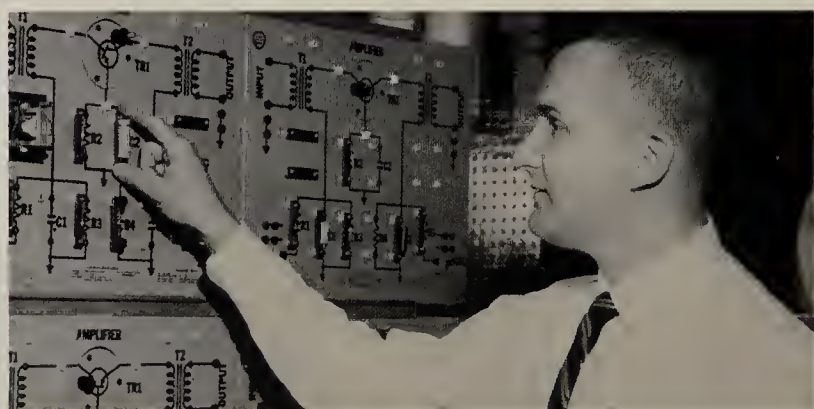


1966

Data processing teacher Eugene Small instructs a student on using an IBM keypunch in a 1966 photo from The Shield. The keypunch was used to create punched cards with data that could be read by machines—early data processing. Computers would eventually replace keypunches.

1968

In 1968, data processing was added as a new curriculum at Joliet Junior College. Classes were offered in computer programming and computer systems. Described in the Evening College 1968-1969 brochure as, "Your opportunity to acquaint yourself with a field that has a promising future," data processing became the fastest growing department at JJC. The department had keypunches, a sorter, a collator, interpreter, accounting machines and a computer. In this photograph, Charles Warthen from the technical education department demonstrates data processing equipment. A mainframe computer was used behind the scenes for scheduling and payroll.





1970

The two-part process of the keypunch machine is shown with a student creating punched cards that would then be sorted and run through a machine (The Shield, 1970).

1975

Faculty member Scott Olsen, who would become the college's first webmaster, shares his memories on the computer equipment in this photo from the 1975 Shield. "This is a NCR Century 100 data processing computer system," Olsen explains. "It supported Administrative services: payroll, report generation, registration/scheduling, and course class-lists....Programming was done by punch card, paper tape or magnetic tape....Storage was large magnetic platter disc drives which were very prone to disc crashes...Output was done by a very large line printer," Olsen recalled. "Oh, the days of green-bar paper".



1972

JJC's Computer Club is formed in 1972. The Student Handbook stated the club's purpose "is to enrich the students' awareness and understanding of Data Processing".



1976

The IBM 5100 was the main attraction at a JJC Computer Club demonstration in 1975. The machine was noted in a 1975 Blazer article as "a look into the future... when every home could have its own computer or computer terminal." The IBM 5100 boasted "a 50-lb package of interactive personal computing" containing a keyboard, five-inch monitor display, tape drive, processor and memory. The monitor display allowed 16 lines of 64 characters, as noted in the 1976 Shield.



1976

JJC counselor and JJC student Linda Aguilar was a student in the mid-1970s. "There was a typing lab on the 4th floor of J, and the typing lab had electric typewriters...They were blue IBM Selectrics which was very modern," remembered Aguilar.

To view additional photos from the college's past, including digital copies of the yearbooks and Blazer, visit the JJC Library Archives webpage at <http://libguides.jjc.edu/collections/archives>.

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